As regards additional accommodation at some of the railway stations, I have brought the matter to the notice of the railway authorities already, and, as a result, they have submitted an estimate for the extension of the Varkalai Station, to start with, for about Rs. 10,000. The estimate makes provision for a goods-shed, which does not exist now, a waiting shed, etc. All these will, however, go to add to the capital cost of the line and the more money you sink on the line, the less will be the return.

I am sorry to say that no arrangements have yet been made by the railway authorities for the distribution of drinking water at the various stations. I shall write to them again.

93. Some suggestions for improving the means of communication in North Travancore.

Mr. V. J. Joseph B. A., B. L. (Member, Nominated) said that the railway policy of Government was laid down in the Dewan's opening address to the last session of the Assembly and that it gave the people of north and central Travancore great hopes, since it was recognised therein that those parts of the State stood in need of roads and that the country was in equal need of railway connection on either side *i. e*, with the Travancore and Cochin lines. The proposal made was that the railway extension to north Travancore should proceed from a point near Kundara or Kottarakara in the Quilon-Shencottah line and join Ernakulam. It was also said in that address that railway connection to Nagercoil was also under consideration. But this year's address had considerably disappointed the people of north and central Travancore in the matter of railway connection. For, this year's address contained an announcement that the extension of train service to north and central Travancore would be taken in hand only after the question of Travancore's share in the Cochin Harbour Scheme was settled, while the survey of a line from Trivandrum to Nagercoil was to be immediately taken up. That announcement had caused considerable heart-burning among the people in the northern and central portions of Travancore. He was not prepared to say that railway extension to north and central Travancore had nothing to do with the question of the Cochin Harbour. On the other hand, the Cochin Harbour Scheme was a very important matter. Apart from that, he submitted that, in view of the long-standing complaint of want of means of communication in north and central Travancore, they attached much importance to any scheme which would facilitate locomotion. It was on that account that they laid greater stress on the railway scheme which, it was stated, would open up the country. Further, the commercial and business activities of the tract of country in question were so vast that the development of the material resources of the State was no small factor in a consideration of the question of means of transport. It was well known that 70 per cent of the trade of the State passed to the Cochin port. All the hill produce from the Devicolam District found its way to Cochin. It was very doubtful whether south Travancore has such facilities and natural advantages. All the exports from the south passed through Tuticorin and Travancore was not a gainer in any way. The Marine Department was at present working at a loss of Rs. 3,000 a year. The Member was sure that, if only their part of the country was opened up, it would result in a distinct gain to Government. He, therefore, requested that the question of railway extension in north and central Travancore should not be kept in the back-ground till the Cochin Harbour Scheme was brought to fruition and that an immediate survey of a line from Kottarakara or Kundara to Ernakulam right through the country be undertaken. Another matter of grievance was that generally the allotment began from the south and, by the time they reached Parur, the purse had become slender. So, the system of beginning from the south which had been responsible for a good deal of difficulties for them in several ways should be stopped. So far as they were concerned, they had only one road for 150 miles, while in the south they had many roads and were now going to have a railway into the bargain. If that line was to be taken up now, it would certainly not be possible for Government to comply with their request, for it was impossible for Government to undertake such schemes all at once and push them on to completion at the same time. Hence he prayed that their request should be

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granted in preference to that of their countrymen in the south. They in south Travancore had the Kodayar Irrigation project upon which a good deal of money had been spent and it brought in only 4 per cent interest. It was, no doubt, a reproductive work and the output of food-stuffs had also increased. They did not grudge all that expenditure. Their only anxiety was that they too should be benefited and should not be left in the cold.

The Member then referred to the misapprehensions which prevailed in regard to the share of Travancore in the Cochin Harbour Scheme. The opinion generally held was that it was unjust that Travancore should pay for a purely West Coast harbour. It was forgotten that all around Cochin was Travancore territory and that the latter would be vastly benefited. It was for that reason that he considered it a very important matter. From the point of view of trade, Travancore was now dependent on the British Government in respect of customs duties. Under the Interportal Convention, Travancore was getting only Rs. 40,000. All those and other similar facts were not known to the public at large, and the earlier they were published, the better. Again, the railway and the harbour schemes were questions which should be dealt with by the two States of Travancore and Cochin in a spirit of harmony and co-operation which, fortunately for them, marked their present relations.

The Member next dwelt upon the necessity of having more roads. The people were severely handicapped and had great difficulties. They had to walk even 10 miles in quest of a cart road. The ideal of Government should be one mile of road for every square mile of land. The amount of neglect with which their continuous representations had been treated for years past had been well brought home to Government. The people in central and north Travancore had shown commendable self-help in road construction. He welcomed the draft rules published in the Gazette for the cutting and maintenance of village roads. Though they required amendments in certain provisions such as the one laying down the width of the road as 24 feet, he generally accepted the rules. He would add that the width of the village roads might be laid down as 12 to 20 feet. It would be safe to leave the matter of fixing the breadth to the discretion of the Executive Engineers. He suggested the holding of a Conference of the Executive Engineer and some leading non-officials of each locality for a discussion of the draft rules before they were finally passed. The Member took the opportunity of expatiating on the extravagant cost involved in the construction of bridges in Travancore and said that, comparatively speaking, they in Cochin were managing bridge construction at less cost. The waste in Travancore was due to the foreign materials used and the costly designs of the bridges. His suggestion was that reinforced concrete need not be used and that masonry work might well be substituted for the same. The last point of the Member was that in regard to land acquisition. At present there was great delay in the land acquisition proceedings conducted by the Revenue Department. Again, in the value of lands there was no criterion or principle to go by. Briefly summarised, the Member's representation was—

(1) that, in regard to the question of railway extension, the Trivandrum-Nagercoil line and all other public works in south Travancore and Trivandrum be stopped, and that the line from Kottarakara be immediately taken up for investigation;

(2) that, as far as roads were concerned, every endeavour should be made to combine railway and road bridges; and

(3) that all the bigger roads should be opened by Government, the ryots being encouraged to construct smaller roads with culverts.

Dewan's reply.—I thank you for your remarks and suggestions. I agree with you in thinking that our bridges are far too costly. Cheaper designs must be worked out. Reinforced concrete works are very expensive and that is one reason for the present high outlay on P. W. D. works. I shall ask the Chief Engineer to consider the desirability of giving up reinforced concrete as far as possible

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Your observation about combining road and railway bridges is a sound one. It struck me that that should have been done, when I saw the Chengannur bridge. I asked Mr. Marini if a railway could be carried over the bridge, and he answered in the negative. I considered whether the two other bridges under construction on that road, namely, the Varattar and the Tondara bridges, could not be combined road and railway bridges. But I found that one of them was going to cost only Rs. 30,000 and that the other was but a restoration work. I thought that it would not, on the whole, be advantageous to put off these two comparatively small works till the railway alignment was settled and I let them proceed.

In regard to land acquisition, I am sorry that there is a good deal of misapprehension on the part of the Revenue officers. Many of them do not read the Regulation. I have had to point out in more cases than one that there was a clause in the Regulation which empowered the Government to declare a case as urgent, and take immediate possession of the land. Similarly, there are clear provisions in the Regulation for fixing the value of land. If the acquiring officer is only careful, no difficulty can occur and he can fix the compensation almost to the rupee. In British India if the final compensation exceeds 10 per cent of the estimated cost, the officer is called upon to explain and is eventually punished if his calculation is glaringly incorrect. Here also such officers will have to be booked sharply. It is the Revenue officer that will have to remedy this defect. There is no defect in the Regulation.

Then with regard to the railway towards the Cochin Harbour, the date of the railway does not depend solely upon the Cochin Harbour. But the two things are so intertwined that it would be advantageous to wait a little to see what the final settlement would be between Travancore and Cochin and British India in regard to the Harbour. No doubt, the Cochin Government would agree to construct the line within that State up to its boundary; but that is only for 12 miles, whereas the railway line in Travancore would be more than 100 miles in length. Then the question would arise as to what is the probable cost. Very probably 2 crores may be required. Next we have to settle what each State should pay. It is going to be a costly work as it traverses through a difficult country. The question of financing it is also a very important one and it would be to our advantage to wait a little before we take it up.

You have also touched on the question of the Cochin Harbour itself. As I have said on another public occasion, I am sorry that I am not in a position to issue a Press Communiquè in that matter, because the correspondence is still in a confidential stage. But I can tell you this much, that it is one of vital importance to Travancore. It is not merely a question of an advantage to Travancore, but it is much more than that.

In regard to the disadvantages to which north and central Travancore are subject in the matter of roads, that is a matter on which there can be no two opinions. It is true that these parts of the country are not half so well served by roads as south Travancore. But what is the good of mourning over that matter? You should be glad that south Travancore at least is served well by roads. It must be our effort to open up north and central Travancore more and more by the construction of new roads. In that direction Government are doing their utmost. After all, our finances are limited and Government are doing whatever they can for improving the communications in north and central Travancore and you should also remember that north and central Travancore possess one advantage over south Travancore, *viz.*, in the matter of water communications.

VI. PUBLIC HEALTH, MUNICIPAL COUNCILS AND MEDICAL RELIEF.

(1) Municipal Councils.

94. Some needs of the Padmanabhapuram Municipality.

Mr. P. N. Ramasvamy Aiyar (Member, Municipal Council, Padmanabhapuram) acknowledged in grateful terms the policy adopted by the Government in regard to

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